

# Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program Grant Awards – 2011



Photo by Motley Design Group

The Route 66 Motel in Kingman, Arizona has been serving Route 66 travelers since 1963. The iconic sign has been featured in *National Geographic* (September, 1997) and other magazines.

## Arizona

**Project:** Route 66 Motel Sign and Roof Rehabilitation  
**Recipient:** Private Owner  
**Amount:** \$10,319 NPS, \$10,319 match

The Route 66 Motel has been a welcoming stop on Route 66 in Kingman, Arizona for more than 50 years. Its towering red and yellow neon sign remains a beacon in the night for travelers stopping to photograph the sign, stay the night, or visit the Route 66 gift shop. Built in 1963 as the "Pony Soldier", the motel is a two-story, brick building with decorative, extruded mortar joints. An aging electrical system has caused many portions of the sign to stop working, and the flat roof on the motel building needs repair. Grant funds will assist with these priority preservation needs, so it can continue to serve as an important Route 66 landmark in Kingman.



Diners at the Ariston Cafe can still enjoy the original dining ambience of this family-run eatery.

## Illinois

**Project:** Ariston Cafe Rehabilitation  
**Recipient:** Private Owner  
**Amount:** \$10,000 NPS, \$10,000 match

The Ariston Cafe in Litchfield, Illinois opened in 1935 and has been continuously operated by the Adam family ever since. A standing tradition for locals and travelers alike, the cafe offers favorites such as toasted ravioli and homemade red velvet cake. With its distinctive curved parapet, finely crafted brickwork, and its original Art Deco-style dining booths, this beloved Litchfield landmark was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. In 2008, a preservation plan was prepared for the cafe, and rehabilitation work has been ongoing since. Grant funds will assist with the current phase of the project, which will focus on structural repairs to the exterior brickwork.



The Chicken Basket has been serving its famous fried chicken since 1946. In historic times, the owner would flood the roof in winter and hire youth to ice skate on top of the building.

**Project:** Dell Rhea Chicken Basket Rehabilitation  
**Recipient:** Private Owner  
**Amount:** \$7,000 NPS, \$7,000 match

Dell Rhea Chicken Basket has its origins in the 1930's as a lunch counter attached to a service station in Hinsdale, Illinois. Oral tradition has it that two local farm women offered to reveal their excellent fried chicken recipe to the owner if he would promise to buy their chickens. The recipe was so good, that by 1946, the service station was closed and the new Chicken Basket was born. Built adjacent to the lunch counter site, the building reflects the no-nonsense, utilitarian, commercial style of the post-war years. After being bypassed by the Interstate in 1962, the business fell on hard times. The Dell Rhea family purchased the Chicken Basket in 1963, and through savvy marketing and its famous fried chicken recipe, the business flourishes today. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. Grant funds will assist with much needed structural repairs to the exterior brick walls.

# Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program Funded Projects – 2011



Photo by Ann Thole

The Missouri and Illinois Route 66 Associations are partnering with the owner of the Luna Cafe to restore the neon sign, which has not worked in 20 years.

## Illinois (cont.)

**Project:** Luna Cafe Neon Sign Restoration

**Recipient:** Private Owner

**Amount:** \$11,000 NPS, \$11,000 match

The Luna Cafe in Mitchell, Illinois was built in 1926, the same year Route 66 was commissioned as a highway. With over 85 years of continuous service, the Luna has reportedly had many famous visitors including Al Capone, Elvis Presley, Hank Williams Sr., and Ike & Tina Turner. Local memory recalls it serving variously as a Route 66 cafe, piano bar, boarding house, brothel, upscale restaurant, and meeting spot for gangsters. The neon sign with its iconic ruby red cherries lit up the night for over 40 years before going dark in the 1990s. The Missouri and Illinois Route 66 Associations are partnering with the owner of the Luna to oversee the restoration of the sign. Grant funds will assist with this effort.



The distinctive 1931 Sprague Super Service housed a cafe, gas station, garage, and residential quarters for the station owner and attendant.

**Project:** Sprague Super Service Window Rehabilitation

**Recipient:** Private Owner

**Amount:** \$10,000 NPS, \$10,000 match

In 1931, William W. Sprague built a two-story, Tudor Revival style building on Route 66 in Normal, Illinois to meet the burgeoning demands of automobilists. Although Sprague opened the business during the Great Depression, he could count on travelers and local residents who needed food, gasoline, and car repair to stay in business. By providing on-site housing in the upstairs portion of the building for himself and a gas station attendant, he could readily meet the needs of his customers while lowering his housing costs. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008, the current owner is restoring the building for use as a visitor center. Following a preservation plan prepared in 2009, a new roof and ADA accessible bathrooms have been installed. Grant funds will now assist with rehabilitation of the historic, wood frame windows.

## Missouri

**Project:** Meramec River Bridge Historic Structures Report

**Recipient:** Landmarks Association of St. Louis

**Amount:** \$15,000 NPS, \$30,000 match



The Meramec River Bridge is one of just three remaining historic steel deck truss spans in Missouri (there once were ten). Of these three, only the Meramec River Bridge is unaltered, the other two having been reconstructed in the 1980's.

Constructed in 1931-1932, the Meramec River Bridge is a 1,009'-long, three-span, steel deck truss and girder structure located near Eureka in the Missouri Route 66 State Park. The bridge carried Route 66 traffic until it was bypassed by I-44 in the 1960's. Today it serves as a centerpiece of the Route 66 State Park, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009. Now closed to traffic and under threat of demolition due to its deteriorated condition, it has been listed on Missouri Preservation's Most Endangered Historic Places list for two years in a row. As part of a larger master planning effort, grant funds will assist with the preparation of a Historic Structures Report to evaluate preservation options and rehabilitation costs for the bridge.



# Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program Funded Projects – 2011



The neon *Entrance* sign features prominently in this historic postcard of the Sunset Motel. However, artistic license was used to relocate the sign to a convenient location for the postcard setting.

## Missouri (cont.)

**Project:** Sunset Motel *Entrance* and *Exit* Signs Restoration  
**Recipient:** Private Owner  
**Amount:** \$7,100 NPS, \$7,100 match

The Sunset Motel was built just after World War II in the “Hi-Way Hills Subdivision” of Villa Ridge, Missouri. Built in a distinctive V-shape, it had a twin-sister property known as the Pin Oak Motel just two miles west on Route 66. The motel featured a spacious lawn and central garden, a circular driveway around the rear of the property, and front and back entrances to each room. Since 1971, the property has been owned by the same family, and is currently operating on a weekly rental basis. Restoration was begun in 2009 to replace the roof, repoint exterior brick work, restore the interior floors, and return the neon sign to operating condition. Grant funds will assist with restoration of the damaged and missing neon *Entrance* and *Exit* signs.



Photo by Jane Reed

The Wagon Wheel Motel was one of the first Missouri lodging establishments to be accepted into the Best Western referral network when the system was established in 1946.

**Project:** Wagon Wheel Motel Roof Replacement  
**Recipient:** Private Owner  
**Amount:** \$17,500 NPS, \$17,500 match

Built in 1935 in Cuba, Missouri, the Wagon Wheel Motel, known originally as the Wagon Wheel Cabins, is a rare example of the transition in roadside lodging from individual tourist cabins to attached units. A well known local mason built the motel using local stone that farmers brought to him. While stone was a common building material for motels in Missouri, the Tudor Revival styling was not. Today, the motel is still locally owned and operated, and is the earliest tourist court on Route 66 in Missouri that still accommodates nightly travelers. Ongoing restoration work has included porch and soffit repairs, window repair, floor refinishing, and heating/cooling improvements. Grant funds will assist with roof replacement on two of the motel units.



Photo courtesy of Arcadia Historical and Preservation Society

A view of the Round Barn from a gas station located just east of the barn. The photo is estimated to be from the 1930's.

## Oklahoma

**Project:** Arcadia Round Barn Siding Restoration  
**Recipient:** Arcadia Historical and Preservation Society  
**Amount:** \$21,000 NPS, \$21,000 match

The Round Barn has stood sentinel in Arcadia, Oklahoma, since 1898. During construction, boards were soaked in water to make them pliable enough to bend into the round shape of the barn. The barn was used variously to house stock and hay, but it is the dances on the second floor of the barn that people remember most. In 1914, Oklahoma County obtained a right-of-way and built a crude dirt road between the barn and the railroad tracks. In 1926, this unpaved road was designated U.S. Highway 66, part of the new national highway system. The barn has been a landmark on the route ever since and today serves as Route 66 and local history museum. The barn was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. Grant funds will assist with much needed repair of rotted siding boards and trim.

## Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program Funded Projects – 2011



The Bristow Firestone Station, ca. 1948. With guidance from a preservation plan, the owner is meticulously restoring the building for use as a body shop, and as a tribute to Route 66.

### Oklahoma (cont.)

**Project:** Firestone Station Restoration  
**Recipient:** Private Owner  
**Amount:** \$25,000 NPS, \$25,000 match

In July, 1929, the Bristow, Oklahoma Daily Record reported that Firestone had purchased lots on Route 66 for the purpose of constructing a building that “will be one of the most modern in the state”. The store opened in May, 1930, and included an Art Deco design with six large service bays, a wash bay, an office and sales area with large display windows. The station prospered through the 1950’s, relying on its premier location and national brand recognition, as well as its distinctiveness as a full service station. Now under extensive and meticulous restoration for use as an auto body shop, grant funds will assist with site improvements including the exterior lights, sign, and concrete driveway repairs.



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

The National Trails System Intermountain Region administers the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, Santa Fe National Historic Trail, Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail, California National Historic Trail, Oregon National Trail, Mormon Pioneer National Trail, Pony Express National Trail, and the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and the Old Spanish National Historic Trail are administered jointly with the New Mexico State Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

These trail and corridor programs are administered in partnership with North American Indian tribes; federal, state, and local agencies; non-government organizations; and private landowners.

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The Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program was established through an Act of Congress to assist private property owners; nonprofit organizations; local, state, tribal, and federal government agencies; and other stakeholders in the preservation of the most representative and significant historic Route 66 properties in the eight states through which the route passes. The program assists in identifying priorities and setting preservation standards as per the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Places*. The program serves as a clearing-house of preservation-related information; provides technical assistance; and offers funding support through an annual, competitive cost-share grant program.

**The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.**